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DEMOS

BY EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

I

All you that are enamored of my name
 And least intent on what most I require,
 Beware; for my design and your desire,
 Deplorably, are not as yet the same.
 Beware, I say, the failure and the shame
 Of losing that for which you now aspire
 So blindly, and of hazarding entire
 The gift that I was bringing when I came.

Give as I will, I cannot give you sight
 Whereby to see that with you there are some
 To lead you, and be led. But they are dumb
 Before the wrangling and the shrill delight
 Of your deliverance that has not come,
 And shall not, if I fail you—as I might.

II

So little have you seen of what awaits
 Your fevered glimpse of a democracy
 Confused and foiled with an equality
 Not equal to the envy it creates,
 That you see not how near you are the gates
 Of an old king who listens fearfully
 To you that are outside and are to be
 The noisy lords of imminent estates.

Rather be then your prayer for what you have
 Than what your power denies you, having all.
 See not the great among you for the small,
 But hear their silence; for the few shall save
 The many, or the many are to fall—
 Still to be wrangling in a noisy grave.